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Gennaro

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(54) PROTEINS EXPRESSED BY MYCOBACTERIUM TUBERCULOSIS AND NOT BY BCG AND THEIR USE AS DIAGNOSTIC REAGENTS AND VACCINES

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- Y10S 435/863 (2013.01) Field of Classification Search CPC A61K 38/00; A61K 39/00; A61K 39/04; G01N 33/5695 USPC 424/184.1, 185.1, 234.1, 248.1; 435/7.1, 7.2, 253.1

See application file for complete search history.

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ABSTRACT

The present invention is directed to reagents useful for generating immune responses to Mycobacterium tuberculosis and for diagnosing infection and disease in a subject that has been exposed to M. tuberculosis.

8 Claims, 8 Drawing Sheets

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mtbn3 atgctqtqqc acqcaatqcc accqqagcta aataccqcac ggctgatggc eggegeggt eeggeteeaa tgettgegge ggeegeggga tggeagaege 101 tttcggcggc tctggacgct caggccqtcq agttgaccgc gcgcctgaac 151 tetetgggag aageetggae tggaggtgge agegacaagg egettgegge 201 tgcaacgccg atggtggtct ggctacaaac cgcgtcaaca caggccaaga 251 cccgtgcgat gcaggcgacg gcgcaagccg cggcatacac ccaggccatg 301 gecacgaege egtegetgee ggagategee gecaaccaea teacceagge 351 cgtccttacg gccaccaact tcttcggtat caacacgatc ccgatcgcgt 401 tgaccgagat ggattatttc atccgtatgt ggaaccaggc agccctggca 451 atggaggtet accaggeega gacegeggtt aacaegettt tegagaaget 501 cgagccgatg gcgtcgatcc ttgatcccgg cgcgagccag agcacgacga 551 accegatett eggaatgeee teeeetggea geteaacace ggttggeeag 601 ttgeegeegg eggetaeeea gaeeetegge caactgggtg agatgagegg 651 cccgatgcag cagctgaccc agccgctgca gcaggtgacg tcgttgttca 701 gccaggtggg cggcaccggc ggcggcaacc cagccgacga ggaagccgcg 751 caqatqqqcc tqctcqqcac caqtccqctq tcqaaccatc cqctqqctgq 801 tggatcaggc cccagegegg gegegggeet getgegegeg gagtegetac 851 ctggcgcagg tgggtcgttg acccgcacgc cgctgatgtc tcagctgatc 901 gaaaageegg ttgeeeette ggtgatgeeg geggetgetg ceggategte 951 ggegaegggt ggegeegete eggtgggtge gggagegatg ggeeagggtg 1001 cgcaatccgg cggctccacc aggccgggtc tggtcgcgcc ggcaccgctc 1051 gegeaggage gtqaagaaga egaegaggae gaetgggaeg aagaggaega 1101 ctggtga mtbn4 1 atggcagaga tgaagaccga tgccgctacc ctcgcgcagg aggcaggtaa 51 tttcqaqcqq atctccqqcq acctqaaaac ccaqatcqac caggtggagt 101 egacegeagg ttegttgeag ggeeagtgge geggegegge ggggaeggee 151 geccaggeeg eggtggtgeg ettecaagaa geagecaata agcagaagea 201 ggaactcgac gagatctcga cgaatattcg tcaggccggc gtccaatact 251 cgagggccga cgaggagcag cagcaggcgc tgtcctcgca aatgggcttc 301 tga mtbn5 1 atggcggccg actacgacaa gctcttccgg ccgcacgaag gtatggaagc teeggaegat atggeagege ageegttett egaeeeeagt gettegttte 101 egeeggegee egeateggea aacetacega ageecaacgg ecagacteeg 151 cccccgacgt ccgacgacet gtcggagegg ttcgtgtcgg ccccgccgcc 201 gecacececa ecceacete egecteegee aacteegatg eegategeeg 251 caggagagec gecetegeeg gaaceggeeg catetaaace acceacacec 301 cccatgccca tegeoggaec egaaceggec ccaeccaaac caeccacaec 351 ceceatgeee ategeoggae eegaacegge eecacecaaa ecacecacae

401 ctccgatgcc catcgccgga cctgcaccca ccccaaccga atcccagttg

4 - 4					
451		gaccaccgac			cgccgcagca
501		ceggegeeee			catcaacccc
551		accagcaccg		agatgccaat	cggcgaaccc
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1251	tcagatcgcc	gtcgtcggtc	tcaaaggtgg	ggctggcaaa	accacgctga
1301	cagcagcgtt	ggggtcgacg	ttggctcagg	tgcgggccga	ccggatcctg
1351	gctctagacg	cggatccagg	cgccggaaac	ctcgccgatc	gggtagggcg
1401	acaatcgggc	gcgaccatcg	ctgatgtgct	tgcagaaaaa	
1451	actacaacga	catccgcgca	cacactagcg	tcaatgcggt	
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1551	cgactggcat	ttcatcgccg	atcctgcgtc	gaggttttac	
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1651	tccacggtgt	ccggtgtcgt	ggtcgtggca	agtgtctcaa	tcgacggcgc
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1751	atttggcgag	ccgcgcatgc	gtggtcatca	atcacatcat	gccgggagaa
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1901	ccgagatttc	actcgacttg		tctacaagcg	caaggtcctc
1951	gaattggccg		_	gagagggctg	
2001		- -	-	- 	

III	<u> </u>				
1	ttgagcgcac	ctgctgttgc	tgctggtcct	accgccgcgg	gggcaaccgc
51		gccaccaccc			
101	ccgatttggt	actgccagcg	gcggtgccga	tggaaactta	tattgacgac
151	accgtcgcgg	tgctttccga	ggtgttggaa	gacacgccgg	ctgatgtact
201	cggcggcttc	gactttaccg	cgcaaggcgt	gtgggcgttc	gctcgtcccg
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401	ctgagttcga	ccgcacggca	ttgaatcgct	ttgtgggggc	ggcgatcccg
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801				ctatggatac	
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651	cgacgtgcag	ccggccgagg	tcgttgccgc	ggcacgtgac	gaaggcgccg
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801	cgatccgtcg	actccggcac	cctcaacaac	cacaacgttg	tag

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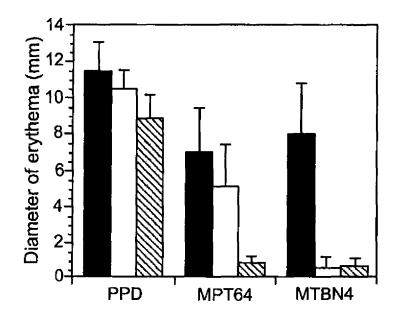


FIG 3

PROTEINS EXPRESSED BY MYCOBACTERIUM TUBERCULOSIS AND NOT BY BCG AND THEIR USE AS DIAGNOSTIC REAGENTS AND VACCINES

This application is a Divisional of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 14/201,308 filed Mar. 7, 2014, now U.S. Pat. No. 9,238,066, which is a divisional of, and claims priority to, U.S. application Ser. No. 13/893,659, filed May 14, 2013, 10 now U.S. Pat. No. 8,974,800, which is a divisional of, and claims priority to, U.S. application Ser. No. 13/198,108, filed Aug. 4, 2011, now U.S. Pat. No. 8,992,942, which is a continuation of, and claims priority to, U.S. application Ser. No. 12/503,717, filed Jul. 15, 2009 and now U.S. Pat. No. 8,021,832, which is a continuation of, and claims priority to, U.S. application Ser. No. 11/677,502, filed Feb. 21, 2007, now U.S. Pat. No. 7,579,141, which is a divisional of, and claims priority to, U.S. application Ser. No. 10/009,383, 20 filed Mar. 4, 2002 and now U.S. Pat. No. 7,932,373, which claims priority to International Patent Application No. PCT/ US00/12257, filed May 4, 2000, which claims priority to U.S. Provisional Application Ser. No. 60/132,505, filed May $_{25}$ 4, 1999, the disclosures of each of which are hereby incorporated by reference in their entireties.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Tuberculosis infection continues to be a world-wide health problem. This situation has recently been greatly exacerbated by the emergence of multi-drug resistant strains of *M. tuberculosis* and the international AIDS epidemic. It has thus become increasingly important that effective vaccines against and reliable diagnostic reagents for *M. tuberculosis* be produced.

The disclosure of U.S. Pat. No. 6,087,163 is incorporated herein by reference in its entirety.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The invention is based on the inventor's discovery that a polypeptide encoded by an open reading frame (ORF) in the 45 genome of M. tuberculosis that is absent from the genome of the Bacille Calmette Guerin (BCG) strain of M. bovis elicited a delayed-type hypersensitivity response in animals infected with M. tuberculosis but not in animals sensitized with BCG. Thus proteins encoded by ORFs present in the genome of M. tuberculosis but absent from the genome of BCG represent reagents that are useful in discriminating between M. tuberculosis and BCG and, in particular, for diagnostic methods (e. g., skin tests and in vitro assays for 55 M. tuberculosis-specific antibodies and lymphocyte responsiveness) which discriminate between exposure of a subject to M. tuberculosis and vaccination with BCG. The invention features these polypeptides, functional segments thereof, DNA molecules encoding either the polypeptides or the functional segments, vectors containing the DNA molecules, cells transformed by the vectors, compositions containing one or more of any of the above polypeptides, functional segments, or DNA molecules, and a variety of diagnostic, 65 therapeutic, and prophylactic (vaccine) methodologies utilizing the foregoing.

2

Specifically, the invention features an isolated DNA molecule containing a DNA sequence encoding a polypeptide with a first amino acid sequence that can be the amino acid sequence of the polypeptide MTBN1, MTBN2, MTBN3, MTBN4, MTBN5, MTBN6, MTBN7 or MTBN8, as depicted in FIGS. 1A and 1B, or a second amino acid sequence identical to the first amino acid sequence with conservative substitutions; the polypeptide has Mycobacterium tuberculosis specific antigenic and immunogenic properties. Also included in the invention is an isolated portion of the above DNA molecule. The portion of the DNA molecule encodes a segment of the polypeptide shorter than the full-length polypeptide, and the segment has Mycobacterium tuberculosis specific antigenic and immunogenic properties. Other embodiments of the invention are vectors containing the above DNA molecules and transcriptional and translational regulatory sequences operationally linked to the DNA sequence; the regulatory sequences allow for expression of the polypeptide or functional segment encoded by the DNA sequence in a cell. The invention encompasses cells (e.g. eukaryotic and prokaryotic cells) transformed with the above vectors.

The invention encompasses compositions containing any of the above vectors and a pharmaceutically acceptable diluent or filler. Other compositions (to be used, for example, as DNA vaccines) can contain at least two (e. g., three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten, twelve, fifteen, or twenty) DNA sequences, each encoding a polypeptide of the Mycobacterium tuberculosis complex or a functional segment thereof, with the DNA sequences being operationally linked to transcriptional and translational regulatory sequences which allow for expression of each of the polypeptides in a cell of a vertebrate. In such compositions, at least one (e. g., two, three, four, five, six, seven, or eight) of the DNA sequences is one of the above DNA molecules of the invention. The encoded polypeptides will preferably be those not encoded by the genome of cells of the BCG strain of M. bovis.

The invention also features an isolated polypeptide with a first amino acid sequence that can be the sequence of the polypeptide MTBN1, MTBN2, MTBN3, MTBN4, MTBN5, MTBN6, MTBN7 or MTBN8 as depicted in FIGS. 1A and 1B, or a second amino acid sequence identical to the first amino acid sequence with conservative substitutions. The polypeptide has Mycobacterium tuberculosis specific antigenic and immunogenic properties. Also included in the invention is an isolated segment of this polypeptide, the segment being shorter than the full-length polypeptide and having Mycobacterium tuberculosis specific antigenic and immunogenic properties. Other embodiments are compositions containing the polypeptide, or functional segment, and a pharmaceutically acceptable diluent or filler. Compositions of the invention can also contain at least two (e.g., three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten, twelve, fifteen, or twenty) polypeptides of the Mycobacterium tuberculosis complex, or functional segments thereof, with at least one of the at least two (e. g., two, three, four, five, six, seven, or eight) polypeptides having the sequence of one of the above described polypeptides of the invention. The polypeptides will preferably be those not encoded by the genome of cells of the BCG strain of M. bovis.

The invention also features methods of diagnosis. One embodiment is a method involving: (a) administration of one of the above polypeptide compositions to a subject suspected of having or being susceptible to Mycobacterium tuberculosis infection; and (b) detecting an immune response in the subject to the composition, as an indication that the subject has or is susceptible to Mycobacterium tuberculosis infection. An example of such a method is a skin test in which the test substance (e. g., compositions containing one or more of MTBN1-MTBN8) is injected intradermally into the subject and in which a skin delayedtype hypersensitivity response is tested for. Another embodiment is a method that involves: (a) providing a population of cells containing CD4 T lymphocytes from a subject; (b) providing a population of cells containing antigen presenting cells (APC) expressing a major histocompatibility complex (MHC) class II molecule expressed by the subject; (c) contacting the CD4 lymphocytes of (a) with the APC of (b) 20 in the presence of one or more of the polypeptides, functional segments, and or polypeptide compositions of the invention; and (d) determining the ability of the CD4 lymphocytes to respond to the polypeptide, as an indication that the subject has or is susceptible to Mycobacterium 25 tuberculosis infection. Another diagnostic method of the invention involves: (a) contacting a polypeptide, a functional segment, or a polypeptide/functional segment composition of the invention with a bodily fluid of a subject; (b) 30 detecting the presence of binding of antibody to the polypeptide, functional segment, or polypeptide/functional segment composition, as an indication that the subject has or is susceptible to Mycobacterium tuberculosis infection.

Also encompassed by the invention are methods of vaccination. These methods involve administration of any of the above polypeptides, functional segments, or DNA compositions to a subject. The compositions can be administered alone or with one or more of the other compositions.

As used herein, an "isolated DNA molecule" is a DNA which is one or both of: not immediately contiguous with one or both of the coding sequences with which it is immediately contiguous (i.e., one at the 5' end and one at the 3' end) in the naturally-occurring genome of the organism 45 from which the DNA is derived; or which is substantially free of DNA sequence with which it occurs in the organism from which the DNA is derived. The term includes, for example, a recombinant DNA which incorporated into a vector, e.g., into an autonomously replicating plasmid or virus, or into the genomic DNA of a prokaryote or eukaryote, or which exists as a separate molecule (e.g., a cDNA or a genomic fragment produced by PCR or restriction endonuclease treatment) independent of other DNA sequences. 55 Isolated DNA also includes a recombinant DNA which is part of a hybrid DNA encoding additional M. tuberculosis polypeptide sequences.

"DNA molecules" include cDNA, genomic DNA, and synthetic (e.g., chemically synthesized) DNA. Where single-stranded, the DNA molecule may be a sense strand or an antisense strand.

An "isolated polypeptide" of the invention is a polypeptide which either has no naturally-occurring counterpart, or 65 has been separated or purified from components which naturally accompany it, e.g., in *M. tuberculosis* bacteria.

4

Typically, the polypeptide is considered "isolated" when it is at least 70%, by dry weight, free from the proteins and naturally-occurring organic molecules with which it is naturally associated.

Preferably, a preparation of a polypeptide of the invention is at least 80%, more preferably at least 90%, and most preferably at least 99%, by dry weight, the peptide of the invention. Since a polypeptide that is chemically synthesized is, by its nature, separated from the components that naturally accompany it, the synthetic polypeptide is "isolated."

An isolated polypeptide of the invention can be obtained, for example, by extraction from a natural source (e.g., *M. tuberculosis* bacteria); by expression of a recombinant nucleic acid encoding the polypeptide; or by chemical synthesis. A polypeptide that is produced in a cellular system different from the source from which it naturally originates is "isolated," because it will be separated from components which naturally accompany it. The extent of isolation or purity can be measured by any appropriate method, e.g., column chromatography, polyacrylamide gel electrophoresis, or HPLC analysis.

The polypeptides may contain a primary amino acid sequence that has been modified from those disclosed herein. Preferably these modifications consist of conservative amino acid substitutions. Conservative substitutions typically include substitutions within the following groups: glycine and alanine; valine, isoleucine, and leucine; aspartic acid and glutamic acid; asparagine and glutamine; serine and threonine; lysine and arginine; and phenylalanine and tyrosine.

The terms "protein" and "polypeptide" are used herein to describe any chain of amino acids, regardless of length or post-translational modification (for example, glycosylation or phosphorylation). Thus, the term "Mycobacterium tuberculosis polypeptide" includes full-length, naturally occurring Mycobacterium tuberculosis protein, as well a recombinantly or synthetically produced polypeptide that corresponds to a full-length naturally occurring Mycobacterium tuberculosis protein or to particular domains or portions of a naturally occurring protein. The term also encompasses a mature Mycobacterium tuberculosis polypeptide which has an added amino-terminal methionine (useful for expression in prokaryotic cells) or any short amino acid sequences useful for protein purification by affinity chromatography, e.g., polyhistidine for purification by metal chelate chromatography.

As used herein, "immunogenic" means capable of activating a primary or memory immune response. Immune responses include responses of CD4+ and CD8+ T lymphocytes and B-lymphocytes. In the case of T lymphocytes, such responses can be proliferative, and/or cytokine (e. g., interleukin (IL)-2, IL-3, IL-4, IL-5, IL-6, IL-12, IL-13, IL-15, tumor necrosis factor-a (TNF-a), or interferon-y (IFN-y))-producing, or they can result in generation of cytotoxic T-lymphocytes (CTL). B-lymphocyte responses can be those resulting in antibody production by the responding B lymphocytes.

As used herein, "antigenic" means capable of being recognized by either antibody molecules or antigen-specific

T cell receptors (TCR) on activated effector T cells (e. g., cytokine-producing T cells or CTL).

Thus, polypeptides that have "Mycobacterium tuberculosis specific antigenic properties" are polypeptides that: (a) can be recognized by and bind to antibodies elicited in response to Mycobacterium tuberculosis organisms or wildtype Mycobacterium tuberculosis molecules (e. g., polypeptides); or (b) contain subsequences which, subsequent to processing of the polypeptide by appropriate antigen pre- 10 senting cells (APC) and bound to appropriate major histocompatibility complex (MHC) molecules, are recognized by and bind to TCR on effector T cells elicited in response to Mycobacterium tuberculosis organisms or wild-type Mycobacterium tuberculosis molecules (e. g., polypeptides).

As used herein, polypeptides that have "Mycobacterium tuberculosis specific immunogenic properties" are polypeptides that: (a) can elicit the production of antibodies that recognize and bind to Mycobacterium tuberculosis organisms or wild-type Mycobacterium tuberculosis molecules (e. g., polypeptides); or (b) contain subsequences which, subsequent to processing of the polypeptide by appropriate antigen presenting cells (APC) and bound to appropriate major histocompatibility complex (MHC) molecules on the $\ ^{25}$ surface of the APC, activate T cells with TCR that recognize and bind to peptide fragments derived by processing by APC of Mycobacterium tuberculosis organisms or wild-type Mycobacterium tuberculosis molecules (e. g., polypeptides) and bound to MHC molecules on the surface of the APC. The immune responses elicited in response to the immunogenic polypeptides are preferably protective. As used herein, "protective" means preventing establishment of an infection existing in a subject. "Preventing" can include delaying onset, as well as partially or completely blocking progress of the disease.

As used herein, a "functional segment of a Mycobacterium tuberculosis polypeptide" is a segment of the polypeptide that has Mycobacterium tuberculosis specific antigenic and immunogenic properties.

Where a polypeptide, functional segment of a polypeptide, or a mixture of polypeptides and/or functional seg- 45 ments have been administered (e.g., by intradermal injection) to a subject for the purpose of testing for a M. tuberculosis infection or susceptibility to such an infection, "detecting an immune response" means examining the subject for signs of an immunological reaction to the administered material, e.g., reddening or swelling of the skin at the site of an intradermal injection. Where the subject has antibodies to the administered material, the response will generally be rapid, e.g., 1 minute to 24 hours. On the other 55 hand, a memory or activated T cell reaction of pre-immunized T lymphocytes in the subject is generally slower, appearing only after 24 hours and being maximal at 24-96

As used herein, a "subject" can be a human subject or a 60 non-human mammal such as a non-human primate, a horse, a bovine animal, a pig, a sheep, a goat, a dog, a cat, a rabbit, a guinea pig, a hamster, a rat, or a mouse.

Unless otherwise defined, all technical and scientific 65 terms used herein have the same meaning as commonly understood by one of ordinary skill in the art to which this

6

invention pertains. In case of conflict, the present document, including definitions, will control. Preferred methods and materials are described below, although methods and materials similar or equivalent to those described herein can be used in the practice or testing of the present invention. Unless otherwise indicated, these materials and methods are illustrative only and are not intended to be limiting.

All publications, patent applications, patents and other references mentioned herein are illustrative only and not intended to be limiting.

Other features and advantages of the invention, e. g., methods of diagnosing M. tuberculosis infection, will be apparent from the following description, from the drawings 15 and from the claims.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIGS. 1A and 1B are a depiction of the amino acid 20 sequences of M. tuberculosis polypeptides MTBN1-MTBN8 (SEQ ID NOS:1-8, respectively).

FIGS. 2A-2E are a depiction of the nucleotide sequences of the coding regions (mtbn1-mtbn8) encoding MTBN1-MTBN8 (SEQ ID NOS:9-16, respectively).

FIG. 3 is a bar graph showing the delayed-type hypersensitivity responses induced by intradermal injection of 3 different test reagents in female guinea pigs that had been either infected with M. tuberculosis cells or sensitized with 30 BCG or M. avium cells.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

The genome of M. tuberculosis [Cole et al. (1998) Nature or onset of a disease or lessening the severity of a disease ³⁵ 393: 537-544] contains open reading frames (ORFs) that have been deleted from the avirulent BCG strain.

The polypeptides encoded by these ORFs are designated herein "M. tuberculosis BCG Negative" polypeptides ("MTBN") and the ORFs are designated "mtbn." The invention is based on the discovery that a MTBN polypeptide (MTBN4) elicited a skin response in animals infected with M. tuberculosis, but not in animals sensitized to either BCG or M. avium, a non-M. tuberculosis-complex strain of mycobacteria (see Example 1 below). These findings indicate that MTBN (e.g., MTBN1-MTBN8) can be used in diagnostic tests that discriminate infection of a subject by M. tuberculosis from exposure to both mycobacteria other than the M. tuberculosis-complex and BCG. The M. tuberculosis-complex includes M. tuberculosis, M. bovis, M. microti, and M. africanum. Thus they can be used to discriminate subjects exposed to M. tuberculosis, and thus potentially having or being in danger of having tuberculosis, from subjects that have been vaccinated with BCG, the most widely used tuberculosis vaccine. Diagnostic assays that are capable of such discrimination represent a major advance that will greatly reduce wasted effort and consequent costs resulting from further diagnostic tests and/or therapeutic procedures in subjects that have given positive results in less discriminatory diagnostic tests.

Furthermore, the results in Example 1 show that MTBN4, as expressed by whole viable M. tuberculosis organisms, is capable of inducing a strong immune response in subjects infected with the organisms and thus has the potential to be a vaccine.

The MTBN polypeptides of the invention include, for example, polypeptides encoded within the RD1, RD2, and RD3 regions of the *M. tuberculosis* genome [Mahairas et al. (1996) J. Bacteriol. 178: 1274-1282]. Of particular interest are polypeptides encoded by ORFs within the RD1 region of the *M. tuberculosis* genome. However, the invention is not restricted to the RD1, RD2, and RD3 region encoded polypeptides and includes any polypeptides encoded by ORFs contained in the genome of one or more members of the *M. tuberculosis* genome and not contained in the genome of BCG. The amino acid sequences of MTBN1-MTBN8 are shown in FIGS. 1A and 1B and the nucleotide sequences of mtbn1-mtbn8 are shown in FIGS. 2A-2E.

The invention encompasses: (a) isolated DNA molecules containing mtbn sequences (e.g., mtbn1-mtbn8) encoding MTBN polypeptides (e.g., MTBN1-MTBN8) and isolated portions of such DNA molecules that encode polypeptide segments having antigenic and immunogenic properties (i.e., functional segments); (b) the MTBN polypeptides themselves (e.g., MTBN1-MTBN8) and functional segments of them; (c) antibodies (including antigen binding fragments, e.g., F (ab') 2, Fab, Fv, and single chain Fv fragments of such antibodies) that bind to the MTBN 25 polypeptides (e.g., MTBN1-MTBN8) and functional segments; (d) nucleic acid molecules (e.g., vectors) containing and capable of expressing one or more of the mtbn (e.g., mtbn1-mtbn8) sequences and portions of DNA molecules; (e) cells (e.g., bacterial, yeast, insect, or mammalian cells) transformed by such vectors; (f) compositions containing vectors encoding one or more M. tuberculosis polypeptides (or functional segments) including both the MTBN (e.g., MTBN1-MTBN8) polypeptides (or functional segments 35 thereof) and previously described M. tuberculosis polypeptides such as ESAT-6, 14 kDa antigen, MPT63, 19 kDa antigen, MPT64, MPT51, MTC28, 38 kDa antigen, 45/47 kDa antigen, MPB70, Ag85 complex, MPT53, and KatG (see also U.S. Pat. No. 6,087,163); (g) compositions containing one or more M. tuberculosis polypeptides (or functional segments), including both the polypeptides of the invention and previously described M. tuberculosis polypeptides such as those described above; (h) compositions 45 containing one or more of the antibodies described in (c); (i) methods of diagnosis involving either (1) administration (e.g., intradermal injection) of any of the above polypeptide compositions to a subject suspected of having or being susceptible to M. tuberculosis infection, (2) in vitro testing of lymphocytes (B-lymphocytes, CD4 T lymphocytes, and CD8 T lymphocytes) from such a subject for responsiveness (e.g., by measuring cell proliferation, antibody production, cytokine production, or CTL activity) to any of the above 55 polypeptide compositions, (3) testing of a bodily fluid (e.g., blood, saliva, plasma, serum, urine, or semen or a lavage such as a bronchoalveolar lavage, a vaginal lavage, or lower gastrointestinal lavage) for antibodies to the MTBN polypeptides (e. g., MTBN1-MTBN8) or functional segments thereof, or the above-described polypeptide compositions; (4) testing of a bodily fluid (e.g., as above) for the presence of M. tuberculosis, MTBN (e.g., MTBN1-MTBN8) polypeptides or functional segments thereof, or the above-de- 65 scribed polypeptide compositions in assays using the antibodies described in (c); and (5) testing of a tissue (e.g., lung

8

or bronchial tissue) or a body fluid (e.g., as above) for the presence of nucleic acid molecules (e.g., DNA or RNA) encoding MTBN polypeptides (e.g., MTBN1-MTBN8) (or portions of such a nucleic acid molecules) using nucleic acid probes or primers having nucleotide sequences of the nucleic molecules, portions of the nucleic molecules, or the complements of such molecules; and (j) methods of vaccination involving administration to a subject of the compositions of either (f), (g), (h) or a combination of any two or even all 3 compositions.

With respect to diagnosis, purified MTBN proteins, functional segments of such proteins, or mixtures of proteins and/or the functional fragments have the above-described advantages of discriminating infection by *M. tuberculosis* from either infection by other bacteria, and in particular, non-pathogenic mycobacteria, or from exposure (by, for example, vaccination) to BCG.

Furthermore, compositions containing the proteins, functional segments of the proteins, or mixtures of the proteins and/or the functional segments allows for improved quality control since "batch-to-batch" variability is greatly reduced in comparison to complex mixtures such as purified protein derivative (PPD) of tuberculin.

The use of the above-described polypeptide and nucleic acid reagents for vaccination also provides for highly specific and effective immunization. Since the virulent M. tuberculosis polypeptides encoded by genes absent from avirulent BCG are likely to be mediators of virulence, immunity directed to them can be especially potent in terms of protective capacity. Where vaccination is performed with nucleic acids both in vivo and ex vivo methods can be used. In vivo methods involve administration of the nucleic acids themselves to the subject and ex vivo methods involve obtaining cells (e.g., bone marrow cells or fibroblasts) from the subject, transducing the cells with the nucleic acids, preferably selecting or enriching for successfully transduced cells, and administering the transduced cells to the subject. Alternatively, the cells that are transduced and administered to the subject can be derived from another subject. Methods of vaccination and diagnosis are described in greater detail in U.S. Pat. No. 6,087,163, the disclosure of which is incorporated herein by reference in its entirety.

The following example is meant to illustrate, not limit the 50 invention.

Example 1

MTBN4 Elicits a Specific Skin Reaction in Guinea Pigs Infected with *M. tuberculosis*

Four groups of outbred female guinea pigs (18 per group) were used to test the usefulness of the MTBN4 polypeptide as a *M. tuberculosis*-specific diagnostic reagent. The four groups were treated as follows.

Group 1 animals were infected by aerosol with approximately 100 *M. tuberculosis* strain H37Rv cells.

Group 2 animals were sensitized intradermally with 106 live *M. bovis* BCG Japanese cells.

Group 3 animals were sensitized intradermally with 106 live *M. avium* cells.

Group 4 animals were mock-sensitized by intradermal injection with saline.

Seven weeks after infection or sensitization, the animals were injected intradermally with 1 μ g of PPD (6 animals from each group), 2 μ g of purified recombinant MPT64 (6 animals from each group), or 2 μ g of MTBN4 (6 animals from each group). The diameter of the resulting erythema was measured 24 hours later. Data are expressed as mean diameter of erythema (in mm) and standard deviations are indicated (FIG. 3).

No erythema was detected in the group 4 animals with any test substance and thus no data are shown for this group. On the other hand, group 1 animals (solid bars) showed a significant response with all three test substances. Group 2 15 animals (open bars) showed a significant response to PPD and MPT64 but not MTBN4.

Group 3 animals showed a significant response to PPD only (hatched bars).

Thus, PPD which contains antigenic/immunogenic molecules common to the *M. tuberculosis*-complex as well as

10

other mycobacterial strains, gave the least discriminatory results in that it induced responses in animals infected with or sensitized to mycobacteria of the *M. tuberculosis*-complex (*M. tuberculosis* and BCG) as well as another non-pathogenic mycobacterium (*M. avium*).

While MPT64, which is encoded and expressed by both *M. tuberculosis* and BCG, did not elicit a response in animals infected with *M. avium*, it did elicit responses in both the *M. tuberculosis* infected and the BCG sensitized animals. Finally, MTBN4 elicited a response in only the *M tuberculosis* animals. Thus, it induced the most specific response and, most importantly, allowed for discrimination between animals infected with *M. tuberculosis* and those sensitized to BCG.

Although the invention has been described with reference to the presently preferred embodiment, it should be understood that various modifications can be made without departing from the spirit of the invention. Accordingly, the invention is limited only by the following claims.

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21 22

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265

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Lys	Thr	Asp	Gln	Ser 85	Leu	Gly	Thr	Ser	Leu 90	Ser	Gln	Tyr	Ala	Phe 95	Gly
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-continued

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Val 225	Thr	Pro	Ile	Thr	Pro 230	Thr	Pro	Gly	Thr	Pro 235	Val	Thr	Pro	Val	Thr 240
Pro	Gly	Lys	Pro	Val 245	Thr	Pro	Val	Thr	Pro 250	Val	Lys	Pro	Gly	Thr 255	Pro
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Thr	Pro	Ala 275	Thr	Pro	Ala	Thr	Pro 280	Val	Thr	Pro	Ala	Pro 285	Ala	Pro	His
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Gly	Gly	Glu	Pro	Ala 325	Pro	His	Val	Lys	Pro 330	Ala	Ala	Leu	Ala	Glu 335	Gln
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Val 385	Gly	Ala	Gly	Ala	Arg 390	Ser	Ser	Val	Gly	Thr 395	Ala	Ala	Ala	Ser	Gly 400
Ala	Gly	Ser	His	Ala 405	Ala	Thr	Gly	Arg	Ala 410	Pro	Val	Ala	Thr	Ser 415	Asp
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Pro	Gly	Val 595	Ala	Lys	Ile	Val	Leu 600	Glu	Pro	Asp	Asp	Ile 605	Pro	Glu	Ser
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Pr	0	Pro	Ala	Pro	Val 645	Asp	Val	Asn	Pro	Pro 650	Gly	Asp	Glu	Arg	His 655	Met	
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Gl	.u	Ala	Ala 675	His	Leu	Arg	Ala	Phe 680	Arg	Ala	Tyr	Ala	Ala 685	His	Ser	Gln	
G1		Ile 690	Ala	Leu	His	Gln	Ala 695	His	Thr	Ala	Thr	Asp 700	Ala	Ala	Val	Gln	
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								cgt Arg									96
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	_			_	_	_		aac Asn 40				_	_	_		_	144
								ggg Gly									192
		50		_			55	_				60		_	_		
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71	-1	-16	~± y	y	85 85	110	J111		JLY	90	JUL		cu	Lou	95		
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Τ.	r	cys	11e 115	Asp	ьeu	σīХ	σтλ	Gly 120	σтλ	ьeu	тте	Tyr	Leu 125	GIU	ASN	ьeu	
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		_	_		_			tcg Ser			_			_	_	_	528
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	999 Gly 210														672	
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	gac Asp														768	
	acc Thr														816	
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	gly aaa														960	
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	gcc Ala				_	_		_	_	_		_		_	1200	
	gtg Val														1248	
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	tcg Ser														1344	
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	gtg Val														1488	
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	a ttc a Phe 530	Gly														1632
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taa	a															1776
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	g gaa	_			cat	dat	cca	atc	act	acc	aac	att	aac	aca	caa	48
	g gaa : Glu															+0
	g agc L Ser															96
	g tog Ser															144
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	g ctg : Leu															48
	ggc Gly															96
acç	g ctt	tcg	gcg	gct	ctg	gac	gct	cag	gcc	gtc	gag	ttg	acc	gcg	cgc	144

The Lew Ser Ala Ala Lew Asp Ala Gin Ala Val Giu Lew Thr Ala Arg 15 S Otg aac tot ctg gga gaa goc tgg act gga ggt ggo agg gac aag gog Lew Asm Ser Lew Giy Giu Ala Thy Thr Giy Giy Giy Ser Asp Lye Ala 50 S Cutt gog get goc acg cog atg gtg git ggt tag cas aca acc gog to acc acc Lew Ala Ala Ala Thr Pro Me Val Val Tyr Giu Gin Thr Ala Ser Thr 65 70 70 S Cag goc acg cog atg goc atg gog gg gog gog goc gog gog god acc acg goc atg goc acg acg acg gog gog gog gog gog gog gog gog gog g														CIII	ueu 		
Leu Ann Ser Leu Gly Glu Ala Trp Thr Gly Gly Gly Ser App Lys Ala 50 COT Ser App Lys A	Thr	Leu		Ala	Ala	Leu	Asp		Gln	Ala	Val	Glu		Thr	Ala	Arg	
Leu Àia Àia Àia The Prò Met Ýai Val Trèp Leu Gin The Àia Ser Thr 65 76 78 80 cag goc aag ace ogt gog atg cag gog atg gog caa goc gog goa tac Gin Ala Lys The Arg Ala Met Gin Ala The Ala Gin Ala Ala Ala Ria Tyr 85 80 ace cad goc atg goc ace ace cag cog tog tog ogt gog at ace gog goa at ace ace ace cag goc got cat cag goc ace ace ace to ace gog to cat ace gog to cat ace ace cag goc got cat ace gog ace ace ace to the In Ala Ala Ala Ala Ala 100 cac at ace cag goc got ctt ace goc ace ace ace tot to gog tac ace 115 115 110 ace ace ace cag goc got ctt ace goc ace ace to tot gog at ace ace this III The Pro Ser Leu Pro Gin II Ala Ala Ala 115 115 126 ace ace ace cag goc got ctt ace goc ace ace to tot gog at ace gog down ace gog ace cog ace ace ace to tot gog ace ace ace to tot got ace		Asn					Ala					Gly					192
Cln Ala Lye Thr Arg Ala Met Gln Ala Thr Ala Gln Ala Ala Ala Syr 98	Leu					Pro					Leu					Thr	240
The Gln Ala Met Ala Thr Thr Pro Ser Lew Pro Glu He Ala Ala Amm 100 cac atc acc cag gcc gtc ctt acg gcc acc aac ttc ttc ggt atc aac His II Thr Gln Ala Val Lew Thr Ala Thr Asn Phe Phe Gly IIe Asn 125 acg atc ccg atc gcg ttg acc gag atg gat tat ttc atc cgt atg tgg 1125 acg atc ccg atc gcg ttg acc gag atg gat tat ttc atc cgt atg tgg 432 Thr He Pro IIe Ala Lew Thr Gln Met Asp Tyr Phe IIe Arg Met Trp 130 aca cag gca gcc ctg gca atg gag gtt gag ttat ttc atc cgt atg tgg 480 aca cag gca gcc ctg gca atg gag gtt gag ctg atg ctg Thr IIe Arg Met Trp 130 aca acg ctt ttc gag aag ctc gag ccg atg gcg tgd tgd tat Val 145 aca acg ctt ttc gag aag ctc gag ccg atg gcg tcg atc ctt gat ccc Asn Thr Lew Phe Glu Lye Lew Glu Pro Met Ala Ser IIe Lew App Pro 175 ggc gcg agc acg acg acg acg ac acg acc ccg atc ttc gga atg cct tc cct Cgc Asn Thr Pro Val Gly Gln Lew Pro Pro Ala Ala Thr Gln Thr 255 ggc acg acg aca aca acc acg gtt gcc cag ttg ccg ccg gcg gct acc ct gat ccc Asn Thr Pro Val Gly Gln Lew Pro Pro Ala Ala Thr Gln Thr 195 ggc acg tca aca ctg ggt gag atg acg gcg ccg atg acg acg acg acc cag acc acc acc acc ac					Arg					Thr					Āla		288
His Te Thr Gin Āla Val Leu Thr Āla Thr Am Phe Phe Gly Ile Am 125 acg atc cog atc gog ttg acc gag atg gat tat ttc atc cgt atg tgg Thr Ile Pro Ile Ala Leu Thr Glu Met Amp Tyr Phe Ile Arg Met Trp 130 acc cag gca gcc ctg gca atg gag gtc tac cag gcc gag acc gcg gtt Am Gin Ala Ala Leu Ala Met Glu Val Tyr Gin Ala Glu Thr Ala Val 145 acc acg gca gcc ctg gca atg gag gtc tac cag gcc gag acc gcg gtt Am Gin Ala Ala Leu Ala Met Glu Val Tyr Gin Ala Glu Thr Ala Val 145 acc acg ctt ttc gag aag ctc gag ccg atg gcg tcg atc ctt gat ccc Am Thr Leu Phe Glu Lys Leu Glu Pro Met Ala Ser Ile Leu Amp Pro 175 ggc gcg agc cag agc acg acc gag acc gcg atc gcg ttc gat cct tc gat ccc Am Thr Leu Phe Glu Lys Leu Glu Pro Met Ala Ser Ile Leu Amp Pro 175 ggc gcg agc cag agc acg acc gc acc gcg acc gcg gcg		_	_	Met	_	_	_	_	Ser	_	_			Āla	_		336
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Pro Leu Gln Gln Val Thr Ser Leu Phe Ser Gln Val Gly Gly Thr Gly 235 ggc ggc aac cca gcc gac gac gag gaa gcc gcg cag atg ggc ctc ctc ggc Gly Asn Pro Ala Asp Glu Glu Ala Ala Gln Met Gly Leu Leu Gly 255 acc agt ccg ctg tcg aac cat ccg ctg gct ggt ggt ggt gga tca ggc ccc agc Thr Ser Pro Leu Ser Asn His Pro Leu Ala Gly Gly Ser Gly Pro Ser 260 ggg ggc gcg ggc ctg ctg cgc gcg gag tcg ctg ctc ggc gga ggg gga gcg ggg gga gcg ggg gg		Gly		_			Met	_		_	_	Gln	_	_		_	672
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Gly Ala Ala Pro Val Gly Ala Gly Ala Met Gly Gln Gly Ala Gln Ser 325 330 335	Ala		_		_	Pro		-	-	_	Gly	_	_		_	Gly	960
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What is claimed:

1. A method of in vitro diagnosis that discriminates between infection by *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*-complex and vaccination by Bacille Calmette Guerin (BCG) strain of *Mycobacterium bovis* comprising:

providing a population of cells comprising CD4 T lymphocytes from a subject;

contacting cells of the population with at least two different antigens, wherein the antigens are isolated polypeptides of the *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*-complex that are not encoded by BCG, including at least one isolated polypeptide selected from the group consisting of (i) a first amino acid sequence comprising the sequence of MTBN4 (SEQ ID NO: 4), (ii) a second amino acid sequence that is an antigenic segment of MTBN4 and (iii) a third amino acid sequence that is identical to said first or second amino acid sequence but that has conservative substitutions and that retains *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*-complex specific antigenic properties; and

determining whether or not there has been an immune 35 response to said at least two different antigens, wherein CD4 T lymphocytes from a subject that has been infected by *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*-complex

respond to said at least two different antigens, and CD4 T lymphocytes from a subject vaccinated with the BCG strain of *Mycobacterium bovis* but not infected by *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*-complex do not respond to said at least two different antigens.

- 2. The method of claim 1, wherein said at least one isolated polypeptide comprises said second or third amino acid sequence.
- 3. The method of claim 1, wherein the step of contacting is contacting said cells with a composition containing said at least two different antigens.
 - **4**. The method of claim **3**, wherein the determining step comprises testing for production of at least one cytokine.
 - 5. The method of claim 4, wherein the at least one cytokine includes interferon- γ (IFN- γ).
 - 6. The method of claim 1, wherein the determining step comprises testing for production of at least one cytokine.
 - 7. The method of claim 6, wherein the at least one cytokine includes interferon-γ (IFN-γ).
 - **8**. The method of claim **1**, wherein the isolated polypeptides of the *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*-complex are encoded within the RD1, RD2, and RD3 regions.

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